

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01
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P R 031553Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4286
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, EG, XF
SUBJECT: ISRAELI PRESS REACTION TO SADAT'S WASHINGTON POST INTERVIEW

1. AL HAMISHMAR EDITORIALIZES DECEMBER 31: THE APPARENT ARAB MODERATION IS BALANCED BY A TOUGHENING IN POSITION. ASSUMING THAT THE U.S. --WHICH IS INTERESTED IN AS RAPID A SETTLEMENT AS POSSIBLE--WILL PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON THE MODERATE ASPECT OF SADAT'S STATEMENTS THAN ON THE EXACERBATION IN HIS POSITION, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT, IN ITS RESPONSE, ISRAEL SHOULD NOT REPEAT PAST MISTAKES, THAT IT SHOULD NOT REJECT EVERYTHING OUTRIGHT, BUT STRESS THAT WHICH MERITS NOTHING REGARDING MODERATION AND REJECT THAT PART OF THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT THAT HARDENS POSITIONS.

2. HAARETZ IN A DECEMBER 31 EDITORIAL SAYS: BOTH EGYPT AND SYRIA MUST BE INTERESTED THAT IN THE EVENT OF THE RESUMPTION OF FIGHTING, JORDAN SHOULD NOT EVADE--AS IT DID IN 1973--OPENING A FRONT OF ITS OWN AGAINST ISRAEL. THE JORDANIAN ARMY HAS MUCH GREATER VALUE THAN THE TERRORISTS' SEMI-REGULAR UNITS. SADAT'S DEMAND THAT

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LEBANON ALSO BE INVITED TO GENEVA WAS MADE WITH ASSAD IN MIND, BECAUSE IT IMPLIES ADDED NEGOTIATING POWER FOR THE DAMASCUS REGIME. HAARETZ CONCLUDES: THE MORE SADAT DOES TO DEVALUE THE PLO'S STRENGTH AND REVALUE JORDAN'S STRENGTH, BY THAT MUCH DOES HE INCREASE HIS PRESSURE ON WASHINGTON--IN THE HOPE THAT THE LATTER WILL EXERT IT ON JERUSALEM.

3. DAVAR IN AN (UNSIGNED) ARTICLE JANUARY 2 SAYS THAT NO FINAL OPINIONS HAVE BEEN FORMULATED IN JERUSAELM ON THE CHANGE IN THE ARAB APPROACH AND ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEMAND THAT THE PLO PARTICIPATE AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. THERE IS STILL A POSSIBILITY THAT THE ARABS WILL AGREE TO CONVENING THE CONFERENCE, IN ITS FIRST STAGE, IN ITS ORIGINAL FORMAT, WITH THE STATUS OF THE PLO BEING INCLUDED IN THE CONFERENCE AGENDA. DAVAR ALSO CARRIES A STORY (BARNEA) SAYING THAT IF THE AMERICANS UNDERSTAND SADAT CORRECTLY, HE INTENDS TO TAKE AWAY FROM THE PLO THEIR RIGHT--WARDED TO THEM IN RABAT IN OCTOBER IN 1974--TO NEGOTIATE ON BEHALF OF THE PALESTINIANS AND FORM AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE.

4. MAARIV JANUARY 2 REPORTED THAT (UNNAMED) LEADING FIGURES ON THE WEST BANK WERE ANGERED BY THE RESERVATIONS OF THE MAYORS OF RAMALLAH, NABLUS, AND TULKAREM ON SADAT'S PROPOSAL THAT ANY PALESTINIAN STATE MUST BE FORMALLY LINKED TO JORDAN. THESE PERSONALITIES INTEND TO FORM AN ORGANIZATION IN ORDER TO PROVE THAT THEY STAND FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA (THE WEST BANK). ONE JUDEA MAYOR PREDICTED A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN EXTREMIST AND MODERATE PALESTINIANS. ACCORDING TO MAARIV, THE UNNAMED LEADING FIGURES WILL PROBABLY WAIT A FEW WEEKS UNTIL THE PLO LEADERSHIP MAKES ITS DECISIONS.

5. YEDIOT AHARONOT REPORTED JANUARY 2 THAT SADAT REPEATED
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ON NBC-TV HIS IDEA THAT ANY PALESTINIAN STATE SHOULD BE FORMALLY LINKED WITH JORDAN. THIS IS A TACTICAL MOVE AIMED AT THE UNITED STATES, WHICH OBJECTS IN PRINCIPLE TO A THIRD STATE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN. IT ALSO SHOWS THAT THE NEW ARAB ALLIANCE--SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT, SYRIA AND JORDAN--REALIZE THAT THE PLO CONSTITUTES A GRAVE DANGER TO THEIR REGIMES.

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